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A Question for the President

To the Editor:

The story in The Times of Feb. 8 that President Nixon's appointments secretary had instructed President Nixon's personal attorney to pay for espionage and sabotage against the Democratic party raises a vital question—a question that I would like to hope some intrepid newspaperman will ask President Nixon at his next news conference, if he ever holds another press conference.

That question is: "Sir, could you tell us whether or not you had personal knowledge of the political espionage or sabotage sponsored by your White House aides on your behalf?"

In other days at the White House, no member of his staff saw the President more frequently or regularly than his appointments secretary. If President Nixon did not know what his own appointments secretary, not to speak of his personal attorney, were up to, then he is incapable of keeping his own house in order. If he did know, then he is implicated in a conspiracy against the democratic process itself.

In either case, the American people are surely entitled to a direct and honest answer from their President on so critical an issue of public ethics—all the more so from a President whose favorite pose has recently been that of keeper of the national morals.

ARTHUR SCHLESINGER JR.
New York, Feb. 8, 1973

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